

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method, comprising:

in response to receiving a data access request, a metadata server:

5 determining a maximum expiration time indicated by a next scheduled
quiesce time;

generating an access token, wherein the access token comprises an
expiration time; and

10 wherein said generating an access token comprises setting the expiration
time of the access token to be no later than the maximum
expiration time.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining a default expiration time; and

15 if the default expiration time is earlier than the maximum expiration time, setting
the expiration time of the access token to be the default expiration time.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the metadata server providing
the access token to a client.

20 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

a storage device receiving a data I/O request associated with the access token;

comparing a current system time with the access token's expiration time;

25 denying the data I/O request if the current system time is later than the access
token's expiration time.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein:

the client is one of a plurality of clients;

the access token is one of a plurality of access tokens;

each of the access tokens is provided to a respective one of the plurality of clients;
and

wherein at the next scheduled quiesce time the plurality of access tokens are
expired without the metadata server transmitting a message to each client
to expire its respective access tokens.

6. A system, comprising:

a metadata server, wherein the metadata server is configured to:

determine a maximum expiration time indicated by a next scheduled

quiesce time in response to receiving a data access request;

generate an access token, wherein the access token comprises an
expiration time; and

set the expiration time of the access token to be no later than the maximum
expiration time.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the metadata server is further configured
to:

determine a default expiration time; and

set the expiration time of the access token to be the default expiration time if the
default expiration time is earlier than the maximum expiration time.

8. The system of claim 6, further comprising

a storage device, wherein the storage device is configured to:

receive a data I/O request associated with the access token;

compare a current system time with the access token's expiration time; and

deny the data I/O request if the current system time is later than the access token's
expiration time.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the metadata server is further configured
to:

receive the data access request from a client; and
provide the access token to the client.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein:

5 the access token is one of a plurality of access tokens; and
wherein the metadata server is further configured to:

provide one access token of the plurality of access tokens to a respective
one of a plurality of clients; and

10 wherein at the next scheduled quiesce time the plurality of access tokens
are expired without the metadata server transmitting a message to
each client to expire its respective access tokens.

11. A computer accessible medium, comprising program instructions
configured to implement:

15 a metadata server determining a maximum expiration time indicated by a next
scheduled quiesce time;

generating an access token, wherein the access token comprises an expiration
time; and

20 setting the expiration time of the access token to be no later than the maximum
expiration time.

12. The computer accessible medium of claim 11, wherein the program
instructions are further configured to implement:

determining a default expiration time; and

25 if the default expiration time is earlier than the maximum expiration time, setting
the expiration time of the access token to be the default expiration time.

13. The computer accessible medium of claim 11, wherein the program
instructions are further configured to implement:

30 receiving a data I/O request associated with the access token;

comparing a current system time with the access token's expiration time; and
denying the data I/O request if the current system time is later than the access
token's expiration time.

5 14. The computer accessible medium of claim 13, wherein the program
instructions are further configured to implement:

receiving a data access request from a client; and
providing the access token to the client.

10 15. The computer accessible medium of claim 14, wherein:
the client is one of a plurality of clients;
the access token is one of a plurality of access tokens;
each of the access tokens is provided to a respective one of the plurality of clients;
and

15 wherein at the next scheduled quiesce time the plurality of access tokens are
expired without the metadata server transmitting a message to each client
to expire its respective access tokens.

20 16. A system, comprising:
means for setting the expiration time of an access token to the earlier of either a
maximum expiration time indicated by a next scheduled quiesce time, or a
default expiration time;
means for receiving a data I/O request associated with the access token;
means for comparing a current system time with the access token's expiration
25 time; and
means for denying the data I/O request if the current system time is later than the
access token's expiration time.